

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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R 251300Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1407

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 19282

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, NATO

SUBJECT: EUROPEAN PROGRAM GROUP MEETING, ROME, NOVEMBER 22/23.

REF: A) STATE 283146 B) STATE 284125

1. EMBASSY IS PROVIDING TEXT OF "AGREED MINUTE" OF EGP MEETING VIA SEPTEL. ADDITIONALLY WE HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO READ TEXT OF MFA REPORTING TELEGRAM TO RELEVANT CAPITALS, WHICH INCORPORATES INSTRUCTIONS TO PASS REPORT TO THOSE GOVERNMENTS NOT REPRESENTED IN EPG, SPECIFYING USG AND CANADA IN PARTICULAR. THIS TELEGRAM, THEREFOR, REPORTS ONLY MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS OF MEETING AND ITALIAN
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VIEWS.

2. ON TECHNICAL SIDE, NOTABLE PROGRESS IS BEING MADE TOWARD SPECIFIC PROGRAMS OF COMMON ACTION. WORK OF TECHNICAL GROUPS AND SUB-GROUPS IS PROGRESSING SATISFACTORILY.

3. EPG WELCOMED PORTUGUESE ENTRY TO GROUP, REPRESENTED BY ADM. ALMEIDA. PORTUGUESE CONTRIBUTION WILL MOST LIKELY LIE IN SHIP-BUILDING.

4. MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT, HOWEVER, WAS BREAKTHROUGH ON COLLABORATION WITH NATO, WITH POINT OF CONTACT TO BE BETWEEN EPG AND CNAD. NEXT NAD MEETING IS TO "STUDY BEST METHOD FOR FRUITFUL DEVELOPMENT OF TRANS-ATLANTICISM ON QUESTIONS OF MUTUAL INTEREST IN FIELD OF DEFENSE MATERIEL, AND TO ADVANCE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS." THIS WAS AGREED DESPITE FRENCH OBJECTION THAT REPORTING OF EURONAD DIRECTOR TO CNAD MADE IEPG/NAD CONSULTATION UNNECESSARY.

5. ACCORDING TO OUR MFA CONTACT, SALLEO, NATO AFFAIRS, DESIRE OF OTHER EPG MEMBERS TO ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THE "SIGNAL" GIVEN EUROPE BY THE US DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT WAS STOUTLY RESISTED BY FRANCE. FRENCH ARGUED THAT US WILLINGNESS TO WAIVE "BUY AMERICAN" ACT AND REDUCE TRADE BARRIERS IS ONLY WHAT US WHOULD HAVE DONE LONG SINCE, AND MERITS NO PARTICULAR KUDOS. OTHERS OVERCAME FRENCH OBJECTIONS WITH RESULTANT MENTION OF US ACT IN "AGREED MINUTE".

COMMENT AND BACKGROUND

6. SALLEO EXPRESSED HIMSELF PLEASE, AND EVEN SURPRISED, AT AMOUNT OF PROGRESS ACHIEVED AT THIS MEETING. HE BELIEVES THAT AT LAST FRENCH HAVE BEEN BROUGHT ON BOARD, IN LARGE PART DUE TO DEFT BEHIND-THE-SCENES WORK BY GOI.

7. SALLEO DESCRIBED GENESIS OF IEPG (WE DON'T KNOW HOW THE "INDEPENDENT" HAS SLIPPED BACK INTO THE TITLE) AS BASED ON THE THEORY THAT FRENCH COLLABORATION IN STANDARDIZATION, INTER-OPERABILITY, ETC. IS VITAL TO THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN SECURITY. PROBLEM WAS ROOTED IN DE FACTO ALLIANCE OF GAULLISTS, FINANCED BY FRENCH AEROSPACE INDUSTRY, AND FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY, INSISTING ON FRENCH ALOOFNESS FROM COLLABORATIVE EFFORT. WITH NO WAY IN SIGHT TO ISOLATE COMMUNISTS, ATTENTION CONCENTRATED ON FRENCH AEROSPACE OFICIALS. ITALIANS AND OTHERS ARGUED

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THAT FRANCE HAD HAD A NO-WIN SITUATION WITH ITS MIRAGE IN THE FIGHTER COMPETITION; THE MIRAGE WAS NEITHER A NATO NOR A EUROPEAN, BUT EXCLUSICELY FRENCH, PRODUCT. THIS LINE OF ARGUMENTATION, AND APPROACHES TO MORE FAR-SIGHTED OFFICIALS OF FRENCH MOD, OUTFLANKED THE "HARDLINERS" IN THE FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTRY, AND HAS LED FRANCE INTO COLLABORATION ON STANDARDIZATION AND A FORMAL LINK BETWEEN IEPG AND NATO.

8. SALLEO OPINED FURTHER THAT THE MAJOR SIGNIFICANCE OF GROWING COLLABORATION MAY LIE NOT SO MUCH IN HARDWARE BUT ITS "IMPLICATIONS FOR EUROPEAN AND NATO DEFENSE DOCTRINE". HIS REASONING GOES THAT, GIVEN LONGER TERM AGREEMENT ON PRODUCTION AND EMPLOYMENT OF STANDARDIZED AND COOPERATIVELY PRODUCED CONVENTIONAL ARMS, THERE IS THE NECESSARY IMPLICATION OF ADJUSTING TACTICAL DOCTRINE TO OPTIMUM USE OF THOSE ARMS. THIS, IN TURN, IMPLIES A HARMONIZATION OF DEFENSE DOCTRINE, WITH ALL THAT THAT COULD MEAN FOR THE FUTURE FRENCH ROLE IN NATO. WHILE GRANTING THAT THE ROAD IS LONG AND TWISTING, SALLEO FEELS THAT THE INTERNAL DYNAMICS OF THIS SITUATION ARE COMPELLING, AND THAT SINCE ITS MEANING IS IMPLICIT RATHER THAN EXPLICIT, THE PRO-EUROPEANS IN THE FRANCH GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE RELATIVELY LITTLE DIFFICULTY IN DEFENDING CONTINUED OR GROWING COLLABORATION ON STANDARDIZATION VIA THE IEPG. IF ATTACKED BY THE GAULLISTS, COLLABORATION CAN BE DEFENDED AS BEING NON-BINDING POLITICALLY, AND GOOD FOR FRENCH INDUSTRY.

9. BOTH EMBASSY AND NATO OFFICE OF MFA ARE GRATEFUL FOR PROMPT AVAILABILITY OF INFORMAL USG TALKING POINTS ON US VIEWS RE IEPG (REFTELS). WE PROVIDED TEXT (IT HAD NOT YET ARRIVED FROM GOI EMB IN WASHINGTON) JUST PRIOR TO MFA'S FULL-SCALE BRIEFING FOR UNDERSECRETARY RADI, WHO CHAIRED MEETING FOR ITALY. IT APPEARS TO HAVE HAD EXCELLENT EFFECT.VOLPE

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